

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2988

INFO AMEMBASSY BANTKOK

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 14239

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR SREF ICRC VS HK TW

SUBJECT: EVACUATION PLANNED FOR HONG KONG RESIDENTS IN SAIGON

1. THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IS ATTEMPTING TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE VIETNAMESE TO PERMIT THE EVACUATION OF HONG KONG RESIDENTS AND DEPENDENTS STRANDED IN SAIGON SINCE THE COMMUNIST TAKE-OVER. THE RESULTS OF THESE EFFORTS WILL GIVE THE UNITED STATES FURTHER INDICATION OF THE CHANCES OF US RELATED VIETNAMESE BEING PERMITTED TO LEAVE VIETNAM.

2. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL HONG KONG SOURCES AN ESTIMATED 100 PERSONS WITH HONG KONG TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND 750-1000 PERSONS WITH HONG KONG ENTRY VISAS ARE WAITING TO DEPART VIETNAM. THE HKG PLAN IS TO CHARTER CATHAY PACIFIC AIRCRAFT TO FLY THE EVACUEES DIRECTLY FROM SAIGON TO HONG KONG. THE HKG HAS BEEN WORKING WITH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES AND THE ICRC TO ORGANIZE THE FLIGHTS BUT A PROPOSAL TO USE ICRC CHARTERED AIRCRAFT WAS REJECTED BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGH COST. REQUESTS TO ALLOW TAIWAN PASSPORT HOLDERS TO JOIN THE FLIGHTS HAS ALSO NOT BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY THE HKG.

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3. IN NOVEMBER A MEMBER OF THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN HANOI TRAVELED TO SAIGON TO DISCUSS THE EVACUATION WITH LOCAL VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES. THE VIETNAMESE REPORTEDLY AGREED TO THE HK EVACUATION AND EVEN OFFERED TO PROCESS HK EVACUEES AT THE EXCLUSION OF ALLOTHERS. THE VIETNAMESE, HOWEVER, REJECTED THE BRITISH REQUEST TO ALLOW HKG OFFICIALS TO TRAVEL TO SAIGON TO SCREEN THE EVACUEES BEFORE DEPARTURE. SOME PERSONS HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED IN HONG KONG FROM SAIGON WITH FORGED OR ALTERED DOCUMENTATION AND HK IMMIGRATION FEARS THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE FRAUD IN MOVING THIS LARGE NUMBER OF PERSONS.

4. COMMENT: SHIPPING OUT THE HONG KONG "BELONGERS" WOULD APPEAR TO BE IN VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT INTERESTS AND WOULD ACCOUNT FOR THEIR UNCHARACTERISTICALLY COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE. REPORTS HAVE BEEN INCREASING THAT THE SRV IS MAKING A NEW PUSH TO RID SAIGON OF ALL BUT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL FOREIGNERS. THE OUSTING OF HONG KONG CHINESE NOT ONLY REDUCES THE UNPOPULAR CHINESE POPULATION BUT ELIMINATES THIS ESPECIALLY CAPITALISTIC GROUP FROM THE "NEW SOCIETY." IT ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE HONG KONG MERCHANTS WITH WHOM THE PRAGMATIC VIETNAMESE ARE EAGER TO DO BUSINESS. ONE HK IMMIGRATION OFFICIAL ADMITTED THAT IF THE VIETNAMESE HOLD THEIR GROUND, THE HKG WILL PROBABLY ACCEPT THE EVACUEES, FRAUDULENT CASES AND ALL.
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